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Group Therapy -- Textbook Purchasing

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Group Therapy — Textbook Purchasing

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Associate Professor, Collection Services Coordinator, WKU Libraries)

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GRIPE: Submitted by **John E. Po-padak II, M.L.I.S.** (Acquisitions Librarian, **W. F. Maag, Jr. Library, Youngstown State University**)

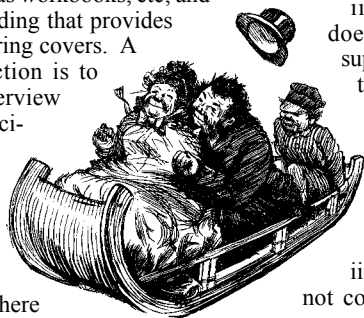
My boss would like me to write up a “textbook purchasing policy” for our library. I was wondering if anyone would share, if a policy is in place, a copy of their policy with me.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Lia Hemphill** (Director of Collection Development, **Alvin Sherman Library, Nova Southeastern University**)

Here is our textbook policy.

Textbooks — For the purpose of this policy statement, a textbook is defined as a monograph that indicates in the preface or introduction its design for use in supporting specific courses, and which may have one or more of the following characteristics: use of colors in the text to distinguish main points or supplementary material; provision of questions or answers for review at the ends of chapters; frequent revision schedules (1-3 years); separate supplemental materials such as workbooks, etc; and plastic-over-paper binding that provides colorful but poor-wearing covers. A textbook’s main function is to provide a general overview and summary of a discipline’s literature. The high cost, frequent revision, and generally poor binding make most textbooks a poor investment for the library; however, there



are occasions when very selective acquisition of textbooks may be warranted.

- i. The textbook is recognized as a classic by experts in the field
- ii. The textbook is written by a current NSU faculty member
- iii. Other materials in the curricular area are insufficient
- iv. Materials that support upper-level undergraduate and graduate-level study only.

The **Alvin Sherman Library** does not purchase or add to the collection textbooks adopted as required texts for any given course at **NSU**, as the library does not compete with the University Bookstore.

Other types of college-level textbooks deserve special attention, as well:

- i. Anthologies: From time to time, anthologies of collected works, (essays, literature, etc.) may be utilized as course materials. There is a distinction between these monographs and textbooks, as anthologies usually become value-added material to the general collection.
- ii. Workbooks: The library does not collect workbooks that supplement a specific college-level textbook. **ALA’s** definition of a workbook is: “a learning guide, which may contain exercise, problems, practice materials space for recording answers, and, frequently, means of evaluating work done.”
- iii. Coursepacks: The library does not collect coursepacks that supple-

ment course materials. Coursepacks are usually compilations of periodical and newspaper articles, and chapters from books. Content in coursepacks is available from the original sources.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Jack Montgomery** (Coordinator, Collection Services, **Helm-Cravens Library, Western Kentucky University**)

This question comes up quite often at the beginning of the semester. Many professors want us to purchase textbooks and keep them on reserve but our official policy is not to buy textbooks. We have a non-competition agreement with our Main campus bookstore.

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Jennifer Arnold** (Director of Library Services, **Central Piedmont Community College**)

The issue of purchasing textbooks seems to be a perpetual one for libraries. At my own library, we do not, as a general rule, purchase textbooks for a variety of reasons — primarily cost. However, given the unique nature of some of the programs taught at a community college and the limited number of print materials available to support those programs, this is not a hard-and-fast rule. Here is the statement that we include about textbook purchases in our collection development policy:

“The Library does not purchase textbooks adopted for classroom use by the College. The collection does, however, include textbooks. These textbooks are acquired only if they are high-quality materials which supplement the Library’s permanent holdings and can be expected to remain important over time or are the only resource available on a subject.”

The **University of Oregon** includes a similarly worded statement in their collection development policy (<http://libweb.uoregon.edu/colldev/cdpolicies/cdpstate.html>), while **Anne Arundel Community College** offers a version that directs faculty to the option of placing a textbook on reserve (www.aacc.edu/library/file/CollDevPolicy.pdf). **DePaul University Libraries** offer a detailed statement about textbooks in the library in a FAQ that you also might find helpful in developing your own library’s policy (<http://www.lib.depaul.edu/About/displayFAQ.aspx?f=33>).

RESPONSE:

Submitted by **Michael A. Arthur** (Head of Acquisitions and Collections Services, **University of Central Florida Libraries**)

We don’t actively purchase textbooks and they are blocked on our approval plan. However, no doubt they are still arriving mostly from firm order requests. 🌿

@Bunning: People & Technology from page 73

plurality of our many databases, presenting a simple search box, for simple search words, that reaches out into all those databases for stunning easy singularity.

Actually we fudge a bit on this. We note, in small font, that **Library One Search** searches most, but not all, of our databases. This disclaimer is a link to more detailed library-speak about coverage that cautions the user that he or she needs to subtract those publishers not participating in the product.

So library search has gotten easier, if by easy we mean searching participative content — or something like that. To be honest, that is quite a handful of stuff, a big bowl of not there. There are two depths to this.

Shallow water fun is the thin data that are harvested and indexed from all of your non-participating content providers. Your discovery service can provide simulacra for your dif-

ficult databases, those ornery ones who wish to meagerly prosper in this brave new world. They can, for example, provide complimentary indexing for products that overlap theirs — we know there are many. They can also crawl the Web and ingest what publishers provide for their Web publications

At a certain point, the substantial holdings of a library online fall off the continental shelf. This is the world of information portals, specialized data sets and databases whose design, purpose, and subscription life address another way of doing content. Here are publishers who don’t need to integrate themselves with the Web or library.

Our sin and cross to bear: we want them. The library’s role in research is to provide both the tools and results of — research. And this is the depth of things where research isn’t easy.

Your Links:

Summon Sites:

<http://lib.asu.edu/one>

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/home/find/summon/> 🌿